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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Mideast

2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

All media bannered the triple explosion that took place last night in the Sinai resort town of Dahab. Up to 30 people were reported killed and more than 100 wounded. Israel Radio quoted Egyptian officials as saying that at least two of the bombings were caused by suicide bombers. The media said that none of the approximately 5,000 Israelis staying in Sinai were wounded. Although no group claimed responsibility, the media deduced that Al Qaida was apparently behind the attack. Israel Radio reported that Interim PM Ehud Olmert called Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to convey Israel's sympathy, and that the two leaders agreed on the need to cooperate against terrorism. The radio reported that FM Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz offered assistance to Egypt, which thanked Israel but declined. Israel Radio reported that President Bush and PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas condemned the bombings. The station reported that French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy praised Hamas for condemning the bombings.

Major media quoted Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying Monday in a televised press conference: "Some 60 years have passed since the end of World War II, and why should the people of Germany and Palestine pay now for a war in which the current generation was not involved? We say that this fake regime [Israel] cannot logically continue to exist." Hatzofe quoted Israel's Ambassador to the US as saying Monday in Washington at the annual conference of the Anti-Defamation League -- which the newspaper said was also attended by Egyptian Ambassador to the US Nabil Fahmy and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch -- that more should be done and less said on the Iranian nuclear program issue. Hatzofe cited Ayalon's hope the UN Security Council will make use of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter or that other ways will be found to solve the problem. Leading media quoted Israeli President Moshe Katsav as saying last night at the central Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem: "I call on the Western world not to stand silently in the face of the nations that are trying to acquire nuclear weapons and preach the destruction of Israel." The Jerusalem Post printed an AP dispatch quoting US Representative at the UN Ambassador John Bolton as saying at a Holocaust memorial service in New York: "the prospect of the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction weighs so heavily on the President as he contemplates the risk to the US and all of its friends and allies but in particular the risk of a second, a nuclear, holocaust." The Jerusalem Post quoted Mofaz as saying at the inauguration ceremony for the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University that Iran has given close to USD 10 million to Palestinian

terrorist groups since the beginning of the year.

The Jerusalem Post quoted A/S Welch as saying Monday at the ADL conference that the US has not ruled out providing financial assistance directly to Abbas and the offices of which he is in charge, while making sure the money does not reach Hamas. Ha'aretz reported that Stuart Levey, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence in the US Treasury will arrive in Israel today to discuss economic measures against Iran and the Hamas-led Palestinian government. Ha'aretz quoted FM Livni as saying during a meeting with Spanish FM Miguel Moratinos on Monday that Hamas leaders would make seemingly moderate statements to obtain legitimacy and financing. The Jerusalem Post cited a new report by the UN that the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories will likely worsen in the coming months if Israel and the international community continue the policy of withholding funding from the PA.

Leading media reported that during his visit to Turkey, Abbas launched an unprecedented attack against Hamas in interviews with Jordanian, Lebanese, and Turkish media. Israeli media quoted Abbas as saying in an interview with CNN-Turk that Hamas political leader Khaled Mashal is a "civil war monger" and that the "constitution gives me clear and definitive authority to remove a government from power, but I don't want to use this authority. Everyone should know that by law this power is in my hands." Israel Radio quoted various Hamas officials as saying that Abbas would pay a hefty price if he tried to disband the new Palestinian government. Maariv reported that Hamas legislator Salah Mohammed el-Bardawil will visit European countries in mid-May.

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday, in what the newspaper said could be the prelude of a High Court petition, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel demanded that AG Menachem Mazuz instruct the government not to strip three Hamas parliamentarians for East Jerusalem of their Israeli residency status.

All media reported harsh criticism in various parties slated to become partners in Olmert's government over the decision by Kadima and the Labor Party to give up the nomination of deputy ministers, following the public's disapproval of the expected size of the new cabinet. Ha'aretz reported that Minister-Without-Portfolio Tzachi Hanegbi (Kadima) is expected to be the next chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, instead of MK Yuval Steinitz (Likud). Maariv reported that Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman would get an expanded transportation portfolio that would include the Israel Lands Administration.

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday, Internal Security Minister Gideon Ezra and Israel Police Inspector General Moshe Karadi discussed recent police data, according to which recent efforts to combat the phenomenon of illegal Palestinian workers in Israel are paying off.

The Jerusalem Post quoted the chief pastor of the Anglican community in Israel as saying Monday that nuclear whistleblower Mordecai Vanunu is going to leave the Anglican church in Jerusalem where he has spent the last two years and that he will be moving into an apartment in East Jerusalem.

Ha'aretz quoted Jorge Bustamante, a UN expert on the human rights of migrant workers, as saying that Israel is ignoring UN queries on issues regarding migrant workers. Maariv reported that a UN report placed Israel at the highest level of countries that are targets of trafficking in persons.

The Jerusalem Post reported that President Bush nominated Joel Kaplan, a Jew, to serve as the deputy of Joshua Bolten, who was appointed to be the White House chief of staff. The newspaper wrote that the fact that White House policy is now in the hands of two Jews is not seen as significant by activists in the American Jewish community.

Maariv reported that Israelis who have acquired the citizenship of an Eastern European country can open a business and live in the US by using an indefinite E-2 investor visa.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Military correspondent Amir Rappaport wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "Israel must prepare as soon as possible to prevent Al Qaida from carrying out the next bombing in Israeli territory."

Senior Arab affairs writer Zvi Bar'el opined in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Al-Qaida's 'branch' in Sinai, which relies on the Bedouins, enjoys geographical conditions and the socio-economic motivation to use terrorism."

Guy Ma'ayan, a history lecturer at the Hebrew University, wrote in Maariv: "Even bin Laden himself doesn't pretend to bring Islamic redemption to the world."

Arab affairs correspondent Danny Rubinstein wrote in Ha'aretz: "Is a clash between them inevitable? At first sight -- absolutely.... [But] signs of the possibility of a compromise in the spirit of a work division between the two sides were already seen in the past."

Ha'aretz editorialized: "Interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert must place the completion of the [separation] fence at the top of his agenda."

Block Quotes:

I. "Al Qaida Closer Than Ever"

Military correspondent Amir Rappaport wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (4/25): "A bombing such as the one that occurred Monday in Dahab should not light up a warning light in Israel, but a flare: Al Qaida's terrorism is getting closer to us. Sooner or later, it will cross the Egypt-Israel border. The main lesson [to drawn from the attack] is that Israel must prepare as soon as possible to prevent Al Qaida from carrying out the next bombing in Israeli territory.... Al Qaida is increasingly directing its statements to Israel and marked it as a key target, rather than a secondary target after the United States and the West in general. That change should be attributed to the line espoused by bin Laden's deputy, the ... Egyptian Ayman Al-Zawahiri and the Jordanian Abu-Mussab Al-Zarqawi. Both view Israel as a primary enemy."

II. "Terror Feels at Home"

Senior Arab affairs writer Zvi Bar'el opined in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (4/25): "Al-Qaida's 'branch' in Sinai, which relies on the Bedouins, enjoys geographical conditions and the socio-economic motivation to use terrorism against the second most important economic domain in Egypt -- tourism.... Many of Sinai's Bedouin residents seriously suffered from the Egyptian government's decision to transfer Egyptian citizens from Cairo and the Nile Delta villages to earn a livelihood in Sinai.... The Egyptians suspect that some of the Bedouins enjoy economic assistance from Al Qaida, thus ensuring their loyalty and cooperation with the organization. As a result, the penetration of the Bedouin community is becoming increasingly difficult for Egyptian intelligence, which finds it hard to obtain real-time warnings."

III. "Islamism Isn't Nazism"

Guy Ma'ayan, a history lecturer at the Hebrew University, wrote in Maariv (4/25): "It is no secret that classical Islam wanted to conquer the entire universe. But this isn't the view of Al-Qaida's leaders.... Even bin Laden himself doesn't pretend to bring Islamic redemption to the world.... Contrary to the Nazis, bin Laden didn't create a racist ideology to scientifically justify the cleaning of foreign influence ... and of course lacks the well-oiled propaganda machine that washed the Germans' brains.... Contrary to the Weimar Republic, the regimes of the Muslim states are quite stable and the national elites enjoy a great amount of legitimacy.... This doesn't diminish the threat of Islamic terror.... But in order to put Jewish-Christian civilization at risk, one needs more than a few thousands of fighters armed with primitive weapons and a fistful of cassettes."

IV. "On a Collision Course"

Arab affairs correspondent Danny Rubinstein wrote in Ha'aretz (4/25): "Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority and of Fatah, and Khaled Mashal and the Hamas movement now appear to be on a clear collision path.... Is a clash between them inevitable? At first sight -- absolutely.... [But]

signs of the possibility of a compromise in the spirit of a work division between the two sides were seen in the past. Hamas spokesmen have often said that they are prepared to let Abu Mazen continue to conduct political negotiations. Even [Khaled] Mashal, in his latest speech, did not rule out the option of peace with Israel following a withdrawal to the 1967 borders. Senior Fatah officials have also said the same thing -- that assistance should be given to the new government that was elected to manage the PA's ministries. Theoretically, this is a reasonable compromise -- an acceptable work division. In reality this is very hard to implement."

IV. "Top Priority For the Fence"

Ha'aretz editorialized (4/25): "Interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert must place the completion of the [separation] fence at the top of his agenda -- first, in order to maintain security and save civilian lives.... Second, completion of the fence is a prerequisite for implementing the convergence plan vis-a-vis the West Bank. It is difficult to conceive a withdrawal to a new security line and the evacuation of tens of thousands of settlers from their homes without a physical barrier between Israel and the territories - just as the fence around the Gaza Strip facilitated the withdrawal from there. If Olmert wants to implement the redeployment in the near future, he must accelerate the fence's construction. Unlike his predecessor Ariel Sharon, who viewed the fence as 'another measure against terror,' Olmert speaks about it, explicitly, as the basis for a political border.... Olmert and [designated defense minister Amir] Peretz must join forces and take advantage of the momentum of their new government in order to hastily complete the huge enterprise started by their predecessors. Their success will pave the way toward vital implementation of the convergence plan."

2. Iran:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "If the West fails to defeat Tehran's death-loving Islamo-fascists before it is too late, they will have nuclear weapons. 'Never again' is now an imperative, perhaps more than anytime in 60 years."

Chief Economic Editor Sever Plotker wrote in the editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The Iranian President ... binds Holocaust denial with the elimination of Israel."

Block Quotes:

I. "Never Again"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (4/25): "The world today is threatened by a new form of fascism no less potent than the one that swept through Europe and culminated in the Holocaust. As an article by German political scientist Matthias Kuntzel in The New Republic reminds us this week, during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, Iran employed thousands of its own children as human minesweepers.... Kuntzel reports that since that war ended in 1988 these brainwashed youth, the Basiji, 'have grown both in numbers and influence' and become the shock troops of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who himself reportedly trained Basiji.... A new report from a committee chaired by [former Israeli minister] Dan Meridor warns that if Iran is allowed to obtain nuclear weapons, a number of Arab states are likely to seek such weapons as well. In the 1930s, when Hitler was on the rise but still could have been easily stopped, Winston Churchill warned that restrictions on German rearmament -- in place since the previous World War -- had to be enforced or else war would break out again. Today, Iran is testing the will of the world just as Germany did then. In the current instance, however, if the West fails to defeat Tehran's death-loving Islamo-fascists before it is too late, they will have nuclear weapons. 'Never again' is now an imperative, perhaps more than anytime in 60 years."

II. "Deniers and Those Who Cause to Forget"

Chief Economic Editor Sever Plotker wrote in the editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (4/25): "Most Muslims are convinced that the

Holocaust of the Jewish people didn't happen at all, or that its importance was inflated by a Jewish-Western conspiracy (for instance, in Hamas's Charter), to serve as the Zionists' PR tool. When the remarks made by the Iranian President, who binds Holocaust denial with the elimination of Israel, fall on this fertile soil, they are well absorbed in popular consciousness and swiftly take root in the daily discourse. It no longer is an embarrassment in the Muslim world to deny the Holocaust. It is even a privilege. It is allowed to bellow publicly that the Jews faked history and invented the atrocities of the Holocaust in order to steal an Arab land."

JONES